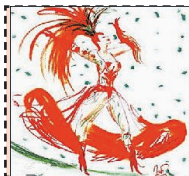


WEB signs financial
accord with AIB pg 4



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Aruba Airlines grounded for six months

Future of ATA employees secured



A small, local charter company, Aruba Airlines, violated air regulations on December 21 of last year.
See story on page 4

During the deliberations in Parliament regarding the privatization of the Aruba Tourism Authority, one of the recurring concerns had to do with the manner in which the government will deal with the employees of this entity.

It was obvious that there were no questions relating to the law to privatize ATA, since this was something that all parties had vouched for.

Minister Otmar Oduber presented documents to Parliament from his predecessor in which most of the matters in the current proposal are identical to what is in those documents.

With respect to the employees, Oduber indicated that he and the entire cabinet of ministers have made very careful provisos for the employees to prevent that any remain without employment.

Of the 75 employees who were employed by ATA and the Cruise Tourism Office, 26 have to apply to the new ATA, the others have opted to remain civil servants and to continue their employment in the government. Of the 26 who have chosen to work for the new ATA, 24 will work in Aruba. From the international offices of all those who applied, only 2 were not accepted, of which one elected to go on pension and the other received a different arrangement.

The minister informed the legislators that those who chose to remain civil servants are being placed in different government offices and departments. The official Law, the LMA, regulating civil servants mandates that public employees whose department ceases to exist such as in the case of ATA, would forfeit the right to be civil servants, and would automatically receive 50% of their monthly salary for 4 years. Oduber, however, has opted to prepare a Social Plan which gives each employee the opportunity to seek a transfer within the Public Sector during one



year. In view of the fact the government for the past 1 year and 3 months have not hired any new personnel, indicates that there are more

than 200 open vacancies. This makes finding a suitable transfer much easier for each of the ATA employees.

Continued on page 3

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

Mubarak retains office, but will not seek reelection

CAIRO, Egypt (AFP) – Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak pledged yesterday that he would not stand for re-election in September, in an address to the nation that came after eight days of anti-government demonstrations.

"I do not intend to run for another presidential term," he said, adding that he would not step down immediately.

Massive tides of peaceful protesters flooded Cairo and Egypt's second city Alexandria in the biggest outpouring yet of defiance in a relentless drive to oust President Hosni Mubarak.

Several hundred thousand demonstrators massed in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicentre for a "march of a million" in the capital, and similar numbers turned out in Alexandria, AFP reporters said.

US President Barack Obama called a high-level meeting at the White House to



discuss the crisis as the New York Times reported that he had sent a message to Mubarak through a veteran former diplomat urging him to announce that he would not stand in elections due in September.

The angry eight-day revolt - in which an estimated 300 people have died and more than 3,000 been injured -- has sent jitters throughout the Middle East.

King Abdullah II of Jordan

sacked his government after weeks of demands for change, Yemen's president summoned parliament ahead of a "day of rage" and a Facebook group of Syrian youth called for a peaceful revolution to start

A committee of Egyptian opposition groups, which includes both ElBaradei and the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, pledged that there would be no negotiations with the regime until Mubarak "leaves."

Australia cyclone upgraded to top threat level

CAIRNS, Australia (AFP) – A huge cyclone barrelling towards Australia was upgraded today the highest threat level as meteorologists warned it was shaping up to be the most life-threatening storm in generations.

Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi strengthened to a category five storm from category four as it menaced the country's populous east coast, where it was set to hit late today or early tomorrow, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

"Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi is a large and very powerful tropical cyclone and poses an extremely serious threat to life and property within the warning area, especially between Port Douglas and

Townsville," the bureau said.

"This impact is likely to be more life-threatening than any experienced during recent generations," it said in a cyclone warning that upgraded the strength of the looming storm.

Yasi is expected to generate destructive winds with speeds of up to 280 kilometres (175 miles) per hour, expected to hit large swathes of the coast which is dotted with towns and tourist resorts, meteorologists warned.

Coastal residents, particularly between the cities of Port Douglas and Townsville, were also warned of an "extremely dangerous" storm tide that was likely to cause extensive flooding as the cyclone crossed the coast.

Ireland expels Russian diplomat over fake passports

DUBLIN (AFP) – Ireland expelled a Russian diplomat after an investigation found Moscow had stolen the identities of six of its citizens to use for spies' passports, the foreign ministry said.

Irish police launched the investigation last year following the discovery of a Russian spy ring in the United States, after US authorities alleged that at least one of the spies had travelled to Moscow on an Irish passport.

"The Garda Siochana (police) report concludes that there is an entirely persuasive picture of Russian intelligence service involvement in the manufacture and use of false documents based on the acquisition of details of six genuine passports belonging to Irish citizens," the foreign ministry said.

A senior ministry official briefed the Russian ambassador on the findings, informing him that that "the activities of Russian intelligence services in connection with the forgery of Irish passports and the effective theft of the identity of six Irish citizens are completely unacceptable."

It is the second time Ireland has acted against diplomats over forged passports.

In June, Dublin expelled an Israeli diplomat over the use of Irish passports by suspects accused of murdering a Hamas official in Dubai.

Embattled Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen, who is handling foreign affairs after the minister responsible quit last month, approved the decision to expel the unnamed Russian diplomat.

EU investigating Dutch passport law

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands -- The European Commission is launching an investigation into Dutch passport regulations. European Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding is looking into whether Dutch passport legislation breaches EU data protection rules.

The move has been prompted by Dutch D66 democrat party MEP Sophie in 't Veld. She argues that the Dutch government is treating

innocent citizens as potential criminals by storing their fingerprints for passports.

The Netherlands' storage of fingerprints goes far further than other EU member states. The Dutch government asks for four fingerprints which are kept by local councils for later storage in a central database. Ms In 't Veld says the United Nations Human Rights Council is also critical of the privacy aspect of the Dutch passport

Egyptians in the Netherlands show support for protesters

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands -- Some 200 people gathered on the Dam square in central Amsterdam yesterday afternoon to show their support for anti-government protesters in Egypt, the Pa-rol reports.

The demonstration was organised by local Egyptian organisations. Demonstrators carried placards calling on president Mubarak to resign, and urging the president's son Gamal to impel his father to quit.

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Failure to comply may cost a fine of Afls.10.000

ORANJESTAD -- Many employees in the private sector have complained that they have not received the required application form for the newly introduced government "Stipend Allowance." (reparatietoeslag), which must be submitted by their employer. Or, that they are not getting the cooperation from their employer to go and submit the form to the Tax office.

Some have complained that after submitting their form, they have not received the monies due to them. The Tax Office is informing all her clients that these practices will be levied a high fine.

By law, every employer is obliged to present the form regarding the Stipend Allowance to each employee. The employer then receives the filled out form from the employee. And, providing the employee complies with all the requirements, the employer is compelled by law to payout the allowance to the employee every month. Furthermore, the employer must make mention of this item on the employee's income tax declaration, AOV/AWW and AZV premiums Also; on the employee's pay slip this

amount must be indicated.

The Tax inspector may request the employer to submit all documents and articles of information to determine whether an employee has received the stipend correctly or incorrectly.

Any employer, who fails to comply with this obligation, will be considered to be negligent and will be fined. The fines will range between Afls. 2.500 and Afls.10.000 for those who fail to comply with payment of the Stipend Allowance. Employers who fail to pay the stipend on time will also be fined, or for failure to mention the stipend on the income declaration, and on the "loonopgaaf" (income statement and the "verzamel-loonstaat" (combined income declaration).

Any employer who fails to submit requested information to the tax inspector will also be fined.

The Ministry of Finance is urging all employers who have not yet complied with payment of the Stipend Allowance, to do this as soon as possible. Employees who feel that they have not been paid this stipend should submit a written complaint to the Servicio di Impuesto.

Public education applications for school year 2011/2012 are now open

ORANJESTAD – The Aruba Department of Education announces to all parents that on February 3 and 4 they will accept inscriptions for preparatory and primary schools. Parents can submit their children's names between 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. this coming Thursday and Friday at these locations:

- For preparatory schools - San Nicolas, Savaneta and surroundings: Preparatory Schools Fontein, Pieter Boer and Sabana Babor.

- For elementary

schools – San Nicolas, Savaneta and surroundings: Basis Skol Hilario Angela and Pieter Boer

- For preparatory and elementary schools - Santa Cruz and surroundings: Colegio Conrado Coronel at Morgenster

- For preparatory and elementary schools - the districts of Noord, Oranjestad, and surroundings: preparatory schools Washington and Arco Iris and primary schools Washington, Reina Beatrix and Kudawecha.

Documents needed for in-

Civil employees in retreat to learn of Minister Visser's vision

Minister of Public Health, Dr. Richard Visser, has begun a series of meetings in the form of retreats with all civil employees working in his departments under his watch.

Yesterday more than 100 employees of the Public Health system met at the Renaissance Conference Center to listen the minister outline his vision and policies that he wishes everyone to subscribe to and follow.

During the ensuing sessions, which is planned to span one and a half weeks, every employee will be participating in the process. He intends to outline what is his vision and



chronic diseases or senior citizens to ensure that these persons can remain in their own

the hospital is very costly to the government, which will entail suitable hospital space, or more nurses. AZV (general sickness insurance) cannot absorb this cost alone.

Visser is also working on getting an agreement with the Netherlands, to get the countries in the Dutch Kingdom to unite and make use of the expertise of each other on Public Health.

The minister of Public Health expressed excitement about sharing his vision with these public servants so they can all work together for the improvement of the island. He also wants their opinions and



policies and that of the government, and at the same time in a transparent fashion present the expenses of our Public Health and other ministries, and what is the government's vision with respect to these. These sessions will reveal a totally new structure showing the interconnection between the different departments.

The minister informed the group of government officials about an option scheduled to start next year. This will be the option to assist persons with



environments and not be hospitalized. This will be a combined project of the Department of Public Health and the Department of Social Affairs. Ten hours per month will be dedicated to a patient as described above without affecting the employee's salary. The cost of putting a patient in

ideas, especially from those with many years of experience in public health service.

He explained, "...after these sessions, no one will not know what is our policy for the next three years, what are the changes, adaptations and new things that will be enacted."

Future of ATA employees secured...

Continued from page 1

The minister is of the opinion that should an employee not find a transfer opening within one whole year, this would mean that he has chosen for the LMA proviso, but desires to select a transitional arrangement equal to the

VUT of 90, 80 and 70% of their salary for 3 years.

In this way the Minister proved how the government has taken seriously the future of each employee, making sure that each were expeditiously allocated.

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Aruba Airlines grounded for six months



A small, local charter company, Aruba Airlines, violated air regulations on December 21 of last year; Minister of Tourism, Transport and Labor, Otmar Oduber, revealed the conclusions of the investigative committee yesterday morning and announced the penalties place by the local Civil Aeronautic Administration.

The 7 passenger Piper-Cub, which initiated regularly scheduled service between Aruba and Punto Fijo, Venezuela on October 8, 2010, had made an unauthorized flight to Curacao late in the evening of December 21. Not only had they not filed a flight plan, but the "stretcher" flight, which transported an individual it was claimed needed medical care, was deemed not an emergency and then worthy of the exceptions allowed for an Air Ambulance.

The plane required Curacao airport personnel to turn the landing lights and activate equipment after the airport had shut down for the night. All their flights were immediately suspended by officials after

this incident pending the findings of the investigation. All of these infractions resulted in what Minister Oduber defined as "an unfortunate but necessary penalty."

Aruba Airlines is grounded for six months for flights to any destinations. Additionally, the management personnel holding their technical permits are sanctioned from working in the Aruban air industry for the next two years, as are those holding the operation permits.

Minister Oduber expressed his regrets for the penalties to the fledgling airline; Owner and Pilot Onno de Swaart was being notified simultaneously of the decision with the public announcement, which was also being officially handed down to the Aruba Airport Authority.

"Air safety is of utmost importance to Aruba, which has 87 international airlines flying into the island on a regular basis. All airlines must strictly adhere to regulations, and what are considered emergency circumstances have a process to follow as well."

by Rosalie Klein

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WEB signs financial accord with Aruba Investment Bank



Last Monday, Mr. O. J. Boekhoudt, director of Aruba's Water & Energy Company (WEB), signed an agreement with AIB (Aruba Investment Bank) for the financing of the sum of 277 million Aruban florins. WEB Aruba, N.V. together with AIB Bank representing 16 local and international institutions succeeded in reducing the interest tariff to less than 6%, which is considered a terrific accomplishment.

The agreed financing covers financing made earlier for WEB as well as for new financing for new equipment. The new equipment here is the Recip III electrical production plant and the SWRO II water plant. The electrical production plant is scheduled to go into operation in the course of this year and the water plant will start production in 2012.

Currently WEB is paying a 7% yearly interest on most of her investments. Now that they have succeeded in obtaining a reduction in the interest tariff this will result in a savings of almost 500 million Aruban florins per year or 5 million

Aruban florins for the duration of the loan period.

WEB continues to invest in new and more efficient equipment which will eventually replace some of the older equipment, such as the boiler system and Aquachem. The reduction of the interest rate reduces the cost of financing to about 1 million Aruban florins per year or 10 million Aruban florins for the duration of the loan.

The new equipment will reduce the consumption of Fuel Oil by 25 to 30% compared to

previous equipment when they are in full operation. Based on the current fuel price, this reduction will reduce operational expenses to about 12 to 15%, which is equivalent to 40 to 60 million Aruban florins per year.

Present at Monday's signing were WEB Aruba N.V., AIB Bank, Utilities Aruba NV and the supervisory Board of WEB Aruba NV. Also present were representatives of the local and international financing institutions.

Management of WEB ARUBA NV used the occasion to thank their staff, Supervisory Board, Utilities Aruba NV, the government of Aruba and the Minister of Finance, AIB Bank and the participating financial institutions for their contributions in making that moment a reality and for expressing their confidence in our Water and Energy Company. Management of WEB also expressed their commitment to continue searching for ways to reduce the operational cost of our water and energy company.



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"Divi Resorts presents its Wellness Fair 2011"



On Saturday, January 29, the Human Resources Department of the Divi Resorts organized its great Wellness Fair for 2011. The event was from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and held in the Ball Room at the Divi Phoenix Aruba Beach Resort.

The day started off with a blood test conducted by the Aruba Heart Foundation; they tested all the employees for cholesterol and diabetes. They also measured the employees' blood pressure and weighed and measured their height.

During the entire day there were different informative

booths including one with all informations of FADA, FAVI and *Fundashon pa Hende Muhernan den Dificultad*.

Also among the booths was David Croes from Optica Perfect Vision who gave an informative presentation about eye care and gave free eye exams to everyone present.

At another booth was Karin van der Vaart with Nutrilite vitamins and her Fitness clothing line Brasilsul.

Dental Hygienist Mirto Tromp gave an informative presentation on dental care.

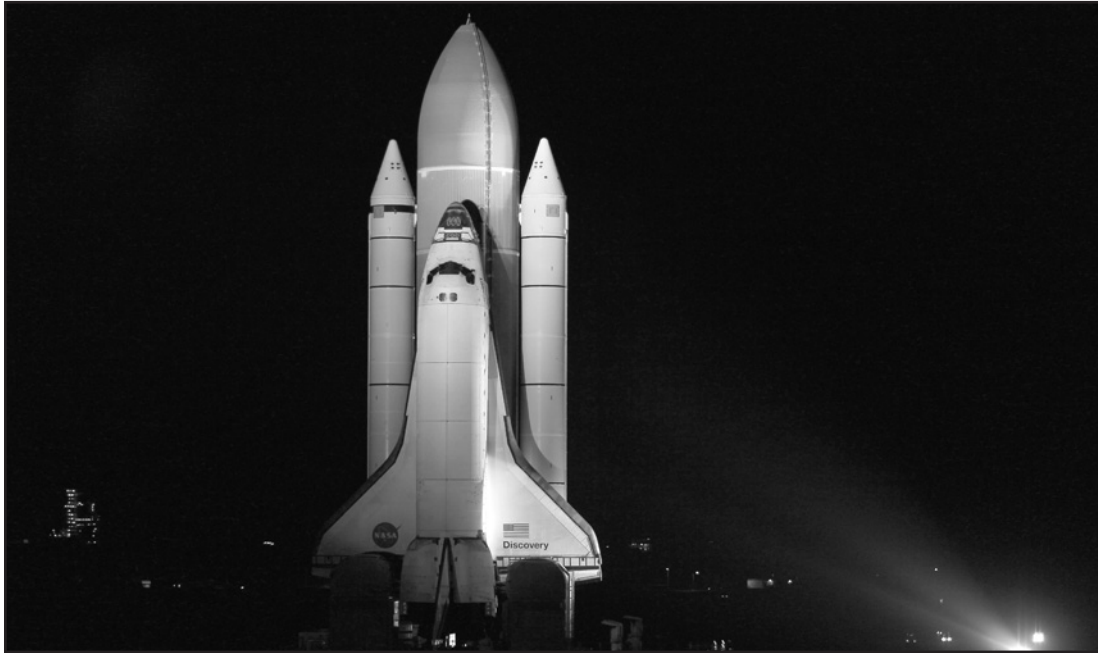
The event concluded with a 1 hour free ZUMBA class

courtesy of Dwayne Wever from Step it Up Zumba.

The Human Resources Department expresses its gratitude to all employees who attended this event and also all the volunteers and experts: Aruba Heart Foundation, David Croes, Mirto Tromp, Karin van der Vaart, Dwayne Wever and FAVI, FADA and *Fundashon pa Hende Muhernan den Dificultad* for contributing with informative booklets.

"You all helped make this event a successful one," a Human Resources spokesperson said.

Sci-Tech



Space shuttle Discovery rolls to the launch pad after emerging from NASA's vehicle assembly building atop a crawler transporter at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Discovery is making the 3.4-mile journey to the launch pad in preparation for its final mission, scheduled for February 24. (AFP photo)

New online crime map of England exposes black spots



LONDON (AFP) – The government on Tuesday launched a new crime mapping website for England and Wales, giving residents information on offences in their neighbourhood and exposing areas where crime has brought misery.

The website, which was such a hit it crashed under the weight of users, is intended to give people the data needed to hold the local constabulary to account and let people track how crime is being tackled in their area.

The data covers the previous month, giving the approximate location of incidents reported to the police.

The site revealed that the most crime-ridden neighbourhood last month centred on Glovers Court in Preston, northwest England.

It saw 44 violent crimes, 73 instances of anti-social behaviour, one robbery, a burglary and 33 other crimes.

The site crashed in its first few hours online after 75,000 attempts to access it per minute.

The information is broken down into six categories: burglary, robbery, violence, vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour and other crime, which includes sex offences and shoplifting to help prevent victim identification.

Policing Minister Nick Herbert said it was the first time that information in this detail had been provided on a country-wide scale.

Home Secretary Theresa May dismissed fears that it would send house prices plummeting in some areas of property-obsessed Britain.

"This is giving people a real tool, real power to see that something is being done about crime in their area," the interior minister said.

"This doesn't make them frightened, it actually makes

them feel a part of what is happening. This will give them the real facts and figures."

"We can't sweep crime under the carpet. We have to tell the truth about crime... and give the information and the power to the public."

"It's going to be a transformation in the public's ability to hold the police to account and drive action against crime and anti-social behaviour."

Crime trends will be established as the site develops, and it could include details on the outcomes of court cases.

Channel island named first 'dark sky' community

LONDON (AFP) – The Channel Island of Sark has been designated the first dark sky community in the world in recognition of the lack of light pollution that allows clear views of the stars at night, officials said Monday.

The tiny island, located west of France's Cotentin Peninsula and about 80 miles (130 kilometres) off the south coast of England, hopes the designation from the US-based International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) will help boost tourism from star gazers.

"Sark becoming the world's first dark sky island is a tremendous feather in our environmental cap, which can only enhance our appeal," said Paul Williams, chairman of the Sark government's agricultural committee.

The island, which is three

miles long and 1.5 miles wide, has no cars and no public street lighting, but local residents and businesses have also made an effort to reduce the amount of light spilled upwards.

As a result, the Milky Way is clearly visible stretching from horizon to horizon and streaking meteors can be picked out among bright stars.

After an audit last year, Sark now joins a select group of global dark sky sites, although it is particularly special, according to Martin Morgan-Taylor, chairman of the IDA's international committee.

He notes that all the other sites are uninhabited natural parks, with the exception of Flagstaff, Arizona, which has a major observatory -- making Sark the first "dark sky community".

Malaysian peat swamps obliterated for palm oil: study



KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) – Peat swamp forests home to such species as the Borneo pygmy elephant are being obliterated in Malaysian Borneo to make way for palm oil plantations, according to a new study.

The Netherlands-based Wetlands International said that the ecologically important forests could disappear from Sarawak state by the end of the decade if the destruction does not cease.

After harvesting much of the valuable timber in Sarawak -- part of Malaysia's half of Borneo, which is shared with Indonesia and Brunei -- companies are now completely clearing the forests to plant oil palms.

"As the timber resource has been depleted the timber companies are now engaging in the oil palm business, completing the annihilation of Sarawak's peat swamp forests," Marcel Silvius from Wetlands said in a statement.

"Unless this trend is halted, none of these forests may be left at the end of this decade."

The environmental group

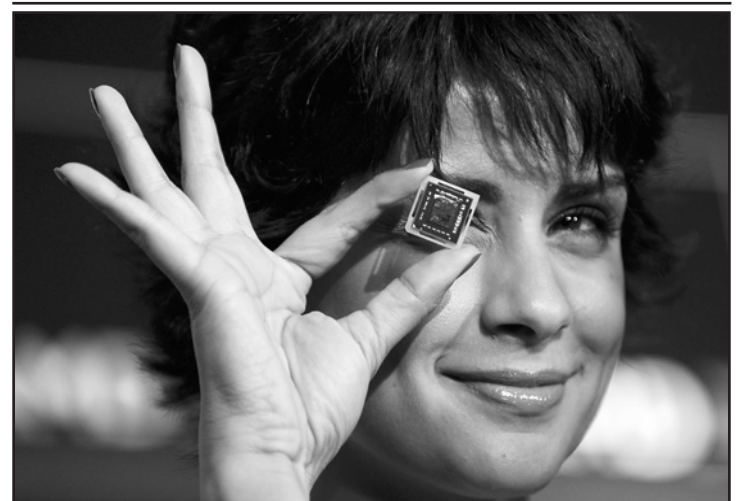
said that until recently two thirds of Sarawak's peatlands were covered with "thick, biodiversity-rich rainforest" but that in the past five years one third of it had been cleared, mostly for conversion to palm oil.

It said that Malaysian government figures seriously underestimated the extent of the problem, and that studies it conducted using satellite images and field surveys gave a very worrying picture.

"The new studies conclude that 20 percent of all Malaysian palm oil is produced on drained peatlands. For Sarawak, this is even 44 percent," it said, adding that the percentage for new plantations was even higher.

Wetlands International said that the forests are home to many endangered species including the pygmy elephant -- the smallest elephant on earth -- the clouded leopard, the long-nosed tapir and many rare birds.

The draining of peat swamps and their conversion to plantations also causes huge carbon dioxide emissions.



Indian Bollywood actress Gul Panag poses with an Advanced Micro Devices Inc.'s (AMD) Accelerated Processing Unit (APU) chip during a product launch in Bangalore on February 1, 2011. Chip-maker AMD announced the launch of a new chip that will offer higher speed in computing, longer battery life and better graphics. The product is expected to hit the Indian market this June. (AFP PHOTO)



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Dogs aid bowel cancer fight



PARIS, France (AFP) – Japanese researchers reported a "lab" breakthrough: a dog that can scent bowel cancer in breath and stool samples as accurately as hi-tech diagnostic tools.

Researchers led by Hideto Sonoda at Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan, used the specially-trained female black labrador to carry out 74 "sniff tests" over a period of several months.

Each of the tests comprised five breath or stool samples, only one of which was cancerous.

The samples came from 48 people with confirmed bowel cancer at various stages of the disease and 258 volunteers with no bowel cancer or who had had cancer in the past.

They complicated the task for the eight-year-old canine detective by adding a few challenges to the samples.

Around half of the non-cancer samples came from people with bowel polyps, which are benign but are also a possible

precursor of bowel cancer.

Six percent of the breath samples, and 10 percent of the stool samples, came from people with other gut problems, such as inflammatory bowel disease, ulcers, diverticulitis, and appendicitis.

The retriever performed as well as a colonoscopy, a technique in which a fibre-optic tube with a camera on the end is inserted into the rectum to look for suspect areas of the intestine.

It correctly spotted which samples were cancerous and which were not in 33 out of 36 breath tests, equal to 95 percent accuracy, and in 37 out of 38 stool tests (98 percent accuracy).

It performed especially well among people with early stage disease, and its skills were not disrupted by samples from people with other types of gut problems.

Previous research has also found that dogs can sniff out bladder, lung, ovarian and breast cancer.

Using dogs as a screening tool is likely to be expensive.

But the success of this experiment backs hopes for developing a sensor that can detect specific compounds, in faecal material or the air, that are linked to cancer.

There is already a non-invasive method for screening for bowel cancer, which looks for telltale traces of blood in a stool sample. But it is only about 10 percent accurate in detecting early-stage disease.

Health & Living

Cuba jails 13 in grisly hospital abuse case



Psychiatric Hospital of Havana, better known as Mazorra

HAVANA (AFP) – Cuba handed lengthy prison terms to 13 workers at a mental hospital where 26 patients died in a cold snap a year ago that embarrassed a government that prides itself on its health care.

The Havana Provincial Court slapped the longest sentence, 15 years, on the director of the hospital, Wilfredo Castillo, for "misappropriation" and "dereliction of duty," an official statement read out on the state news broadcast said. The other sentences ranged from 5 to 15 years.

The court said prosecutors proved their case but regretted that the case resulted in "several people dying," the text said in part.

According to the official account, 26 patients died when temperatures on the tropical island plunged to 3.9 degrees Celsius (39 degrees Fahrenheit) beginning on January 9, 2010.

Cuba's outlawed human rights commission has estimated that more than 30 patients died because others perished later at other hospitals

and were not included in the official toll.

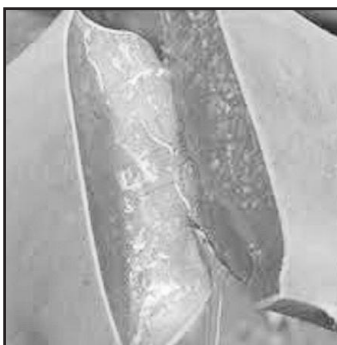
Hospital employees told the press at the time that the patients were undernourished and had no blankets because the hospital's supplies had been stolen by people who worked there.

Clinical evaluations of the victims found signs of malnutrition, a high incidence of anemia and vitamin deficiencies, according to the official report, which said the hospital received enough food for 2,458 patients when there were only 1,484 patients, the official report said.

It added that an absence of controls "favored the misappropriation of resources destined fundamentally for the nourishment of the patients, as well as for clothing and bedding for their protection."

Health and education are free and available to all in Cuba, but the government has acknowledged that the system has deteriorated in recent years due to internal economic problems and the US trade embargo.

Aloe (Aloe vera)



Background

Transparent gel from the pulp of the meaty leaves of Aloe vera has been used topically for thousands of years to treat wounds, skin infections, burns, and numerous other dermatologic conditions. Dried latex from the inner lining of the leaf has traditionally been used as an oral laxative.

There is strong scientific evidence in support of the laxative properties of aloe latex, based on the well-established cathartic properties of anthraquinone glycosides (found in aloe latex). However, aloe's therapeutic value compared with other approaches to constipation remains unclear.

There is promising preliminary support from laboratory, animal, and human studies that topical aloe gel has immunomodulatory properties that may improve wound healing and skin inflammation.

Adults

Pure Aloe vera gel is often used liberally on the skin three to four times per day for the treatment of sunburn and other minor burns. Creams and lotions are also available. There are no reports that using aloe on the skin causes absorption of chemicals into the body that may cause significant side effects. Skin products are available that contain aloe alone or aloe combined with other active ingredients.

The dose often recommended for constipation is the minimum amount to maintain a soft stool by mouth. As an alternative, in combination with celandine (300 milligrams) and psyllium (50 milligrams), 150 milligrams of the dried juice per day of aloe has been found effective as a laxative in research.

Other uses of aloe from scientific studies include the treatment of genital herpes (cream applied to lesions for five consecutive days per week for up to two weeks) and psoriasis (cream applied to skin three times per day for five consecutive days per week for up to four weeks).

Children

(younger than 18 years)
Topical (skin) use of aloe gel in children is common and

appears to be well tolerated. However a dermatologist and pharmacist should be consulted before starting therapy. Aloe taken by mouth has not been studied in children and theoretically may have harmful effects, such as lowering blood sugar levels. Therefore, it is not recommended.

Allergies

People with known allergy to garlic, onions, tulips, or other plants of the Liliaceae family may have allergic reactions to aloe. Individuals using aloe gel for prolonged times have developed allergic reactions including hives and eczema-like rash. Aloe injections have caused severe reactions and should be avoided.

Side Effects and Warnings

The use of aloe on surgical wounds has been reported to slow healing; redness and burning has been reported after aloe juice was applied to the face after a skin-peeling procedure (dermabrasion). Application of aloe prior to sun exposure may lead to rash in sun-exposed areas.

The use of aloe or aloe latex by mouth for laxative effects can cause cramping or diarrhea.

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Peru bans Joran van der Sloot interview 'Aruba beaches and beer bottles don't mix'

LIMA, Peru -- Peruvian prison authorities have denied Dutch murder suspect Joran van der Sloot the right to speak to Radio Netherlands Worldwide. His lawyer Máximo Altez has lodged a complaint against Peru's legal authorities.

Mr Altez said that Peru is reluctant to grant RNW the interview because of general elections in three months. In normal circumstances it is quite accepted for prisoners to speak to journalists from their cell, according to the lawyer.

Mr Van der Sloot was jailed on suspicion of killing Peruvian student Stephany Flores in

a hotel room in Lima in 2010. The woman's father, Ricardo Flores, is a congress candidate on behalf of the Solidaridad Nacional party. He is being accused by Joran's lawyer of only wanting to "damage" Van der Sloot.

Joran van der Sloot himself had already consented to speak to RNW's Latin America section. The 23-year old Dutchman is also the main suspect in the 2005 Natalee Holloway disappearance case, and has hit the headlines more than once with sensational stories about the case which often proved to be ill-founded.



Aruba has one of the best reefs in the Caribbean ocean. Needless to say, the reef is well protected from north to south and from east to west. Weekly, when scuba diving I have seen how much the dive centers such as S.E.Aruba Fly and Dive and Mermaid Divers care and maintained this island and the reef. Thus, not only dive centers help to keep the reef in this healthy state, also volunteers do Reef Care projects being a huge benefit for the environment.

The Caribbean Sea is rich in hundreds of marine creatures to dive with, such as schools of surgeon fish, triggerfish, barracudas, turtles, groupers, green moray eels, spotted eagle rays and many more. Indeed, to keep this reef with all these delightful animals we must keep our attractions clean for further generations to come.

Therefore, after clubbing on the weekends people tend to park their cars at Eagle and Nikkie beach. As a matter of



fact, these beaches are becoming garbage places for beer bottles and plastic juices bottles which in a few years if not solved may cause some beaches to become polluted by the excess of bottles on shore.

So, please if you go to these tourist attractions, bring a plastic bag with you and collect all

bottles before you leave these sites.

Remember is better prevent that say sorry.

By Gino Giannone
Open Water Scuba Instructor
Underwater Videographer
and Photographer
godiving2011@hotmail.com

Breakfast
7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

EGG DISHES
*2 eggs sunny side up
with ham & cheese
*Scrambled
with ham, cheese, onions,
green pepper, tomato, mushroom
*Plain omelettes
with ham, cheese, onion, green pepper,
tomato, mushroom
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Hadicurari Fisheries Center now offers information via Facebook too

All fishermen and boat owners are invited to sign on as friend to receive uptades via internet

HADICURARI -- Due to popular demand Hadicurari Fisheries Center also provides information and involves the fishermen of Aruba by means of the internet. The foundation Centro di Pesca Hadicurari now has its own electronic address on facebook where it regularly disseminates information about safety at sea, weather advisories of the meteorological service of Aruba and general information relevant to all fishermen and boat owners.

Everyone is invited to associate themselves by signing on as a friend to periodically receive the most recent information, weather advisories and invitations to events at and by the center.

Pictures of its activities:

The photos of events of Hadicurari and all its associated fisheries centers are very

popular. A lot of people who always attend the events now can just sign on and get to see their pictures, something they have requested for a long time and is now available at the click of a button. This is the latest form where everyone can now share with the fishermen of Hadicurari and all its associated colleagues.

Just go to facebook and look up Hadicurari Centro di Pesca or the email hadicurari.pesca@gmail.com and you will find the latest source of information for fishermen, boat owners and all activities of the center.

As a friend of Hadicurari you can be sure to be the first with the most recent information. So sign-up yourself now or ask someone who is on facebook to keep you updated of all that Hadicurari has to offer via this newest outlet.



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Yogi Bear is here and our kids are excited!

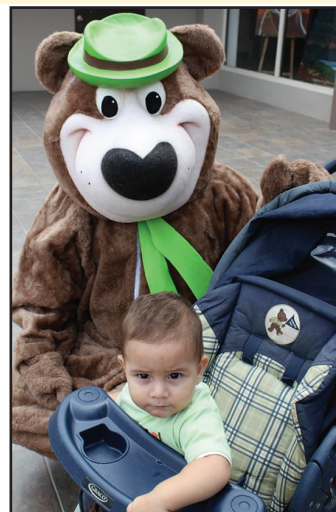


Immediately following the announcement of the showing of Yogi Bear in the Cinemas of Renaissance Marketplace, the excitement among our children was felt all over the island.

During the past weekend many kids were taken by their parents to see the movie and at the same time meet “Yogi Bear” in person. Yogi Bear was present to meet and greet the many kids who came to see his movie.

The famous producer Warner Bros created another movie of the original Hanna Barbera series. We all remember Yogi Bear and Boo Boo who are known for their episodes of stealing food from visitors in the Jellystone Park. Their escapades in the park would put the Park Rangers on wild chases and problems and their fun and enjoyment activities enjoyed by big and small. This movie is under the direction of Eric Brevig with actor Dan Aykroyd, a faithful fan of Yogi Bear. A favorite actor and singer among young people today is Justin Timberlake who plays the roll of Boo Boo.

Yogi Bear is now playing at The Cinemas on weekdays at 4:30 p.m., at the Cinemas at



Paseo Herencia, and at Renaissance Marketplace at 5:00 pm. On the weekends the schedule is at 12:30p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Paseo Herencia Mall and at 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. at Renaissance Marketplace.

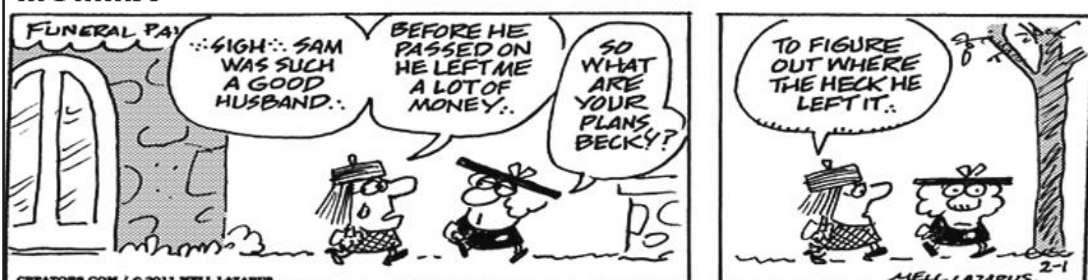
The accompanying photos show some of the gleaming faces of the children who’ve already had the opportunity of seeing this tremendous movie which has captured the attention of movie goers worldwide.

COMICS

PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



CROSSWORD

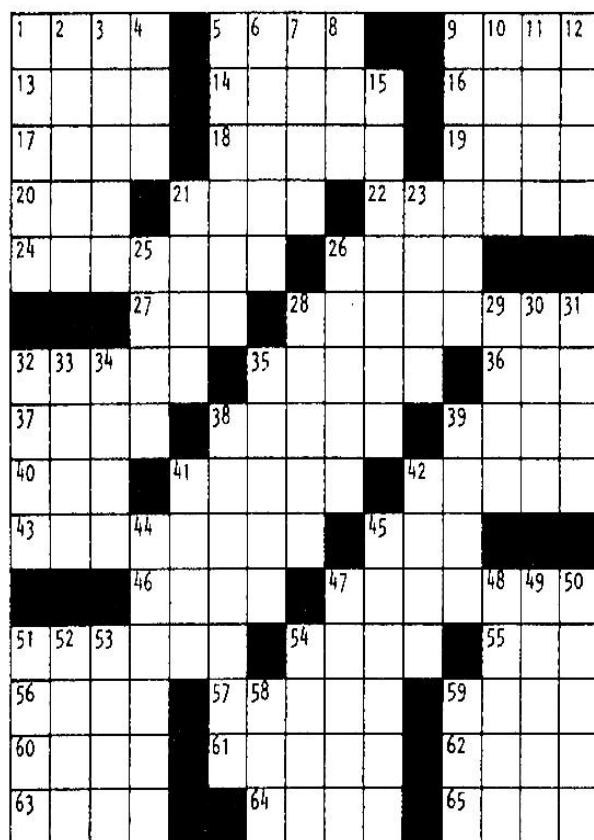


CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1. Pepper's partner
5. Hit flies
9. Go by car
13. Forest member
14. Hue
16. Region
17. Scan a book
18. Speak publicly
19. Gasp
20. Tavern
21. Ado
22. Swoons



24. Grazing land
26. Entice
27. Beast of burden
28. Sorrows
32. Book designation
35. Maine trees
36. Seance sound
37. False god
38. Adjusted a piano
39. Watering tube
40. Building wing
41. Ambulance horn
42. Feasted
43. Took out taxes
45. Beige
46. Memo
47. Dress design
51. Say a poem
54. Mind
55. Born
56. Revise copy
57. Cook a turkey
59. Actor Cronyn
60. Building location
61. Fe Trail
62. Bone-dry
63. Golf gadgets
64. Sharp
65. Procures
10. Persia, nowadays
11. Fender mishap
12. Devours
15. Declined
21. Circuit breaker
23. Greek war god
25. Lofty
26. Flax fabric
28. Dug ore
29. Press clothes
30. Comfort
31. Raced
32. Evened the score
33. Not busy
34. Narrated
35. Thick soup
38. Giggles
39. Clue
41. Resident of Edinburgh
42. Social appointment
44. Joins
45. Kilt pattern
47. Glue
48. Harden
49. Send payment
50. Requires
51. Take it easy
52. Songstress Adams
53. Quote
54. Walking stick
58. Acorn tree
59. Crone

DOWN

1. "77 Sunset"
2. Circus ring
3. Tilts
4. Senator Kennedy's nickname
5. Scrubs vigorously
6. In poorer shape
7. Mournful cry
8. Small child
9. Long, narrow sword

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Care Center
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Horacio Oduber Hospital
Tel. 587-4300

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Telephone 100

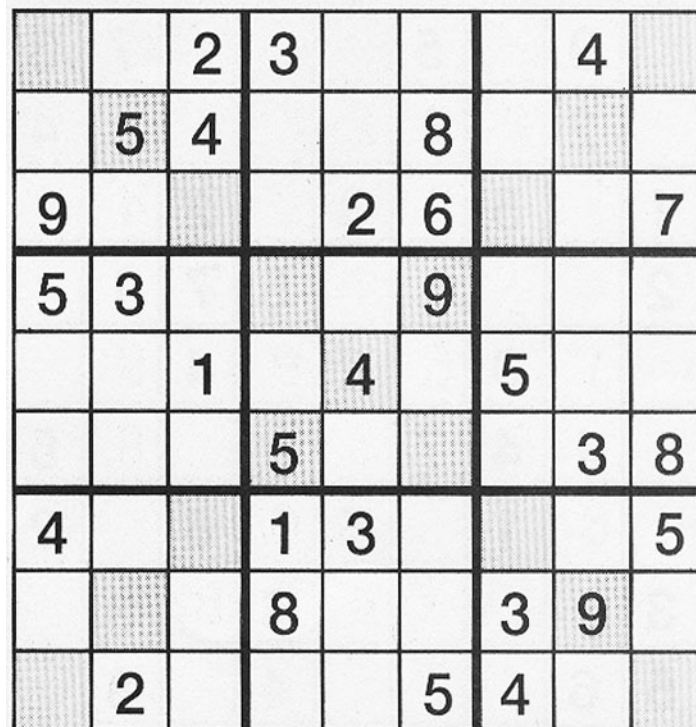
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

9	1	4	5	6	7	8	2	3
2	6	3	4	9	8	5	7	1
5	8	7	2	3	1	6	9	4
8	3	2	1	7	5	4	6	9
6	2	9	8	4	9	1	8	2
4	9	1	6	8	2	7	3	5
7	5	8	9	2	4	3	1	6
3	2	6	5	7	1	8	4	9
1	7	9	3	5	6	2	8	4

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

BRIEFS:

Pfizer quadruples profit, predicts tough year:

NEW YORK (AFP) – Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced bumper profits for the final quarter of 2010, but predicted tough challenges ahead as it moved to cut staff and research spending.

The world's largest drugmaker quadrupled fourth-quarter profits to \$2.9 billion, slightly better than analysts expected, as it reaped the benefits of an October 2009 takeover of Wyeth, whose legacy products contributed \$2.3 billion to sales.

But for all of 2010, profits fell four percent to \$8.3 billion, heralding tough times ahead.

Bracing itself, Pfizer announced it would shutter its European research hub in Kent, Britain, with the loss of around 2,400 local jobs. The facility had been responsible for the discovery of Viagra and dozens of other ground-breaking and lucrative drugs for the company.

=====

Murdoch's iPad newspaper to be launched:

WASHINGTON (AFP) – News Corp.'s Rupert Murdoch is to unveil "The Daily" a digital newspaper for the iPad, the tablet computer the media tycoon has said may be the savior of the struggling news industry.

Murdoch, the 79-year-old chairman and chief executive of News Corp., and Eddy Cue, vice president of Internet Services at iPad maker Apple, are to take the wraps off The Daily at an event at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The Daily had originally been scheduled to be unveiled in San Francisco last month but the event was delayed at the last minute by Apple's announcement that chief executive Steve Jobs was going on medical leave.

=====

Oil price holds above \$100:

LONDON (AFP) – World oil prices drifted lower but held above \$100 on fears that worsening turmoil in Egypt could disrupt supply flows through the strategic Suez Canal, analysts said.

Prices broke through the psychological \$100 threshold for the first time since the 2008 economic crisis, as mounting protests in Egypt demanded the removal of President Hosni Mubarak. Egypt is not a major oil producer, but is home to the vitally important Suez Canal, which carries around 2.4 million barrels of oil a day -- roughly equivalent to the daily output of Iraq or Brazil.

=====

Euro hits two-month dollar peak:

LONDON (AFP) – The euro hit the highest level against the dollar in over two months on expectations of eurozone rate hikes, while the greenback fell to a one-month low against the yen, dealers said. The rising trend in oil and commodity prices is fuelling concerns over inflation in the eurozone, said Yuichiro Harada, senior dealer at Mizuho Corporate Bank to Dow Jones Newswires.

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IMF says ready to help Egypt, others in trouble



Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

SINGAPORE (AFP) – The IMF said it was ready to help riot-torn Egypt and other nations stricken by chronic unemployment, but told governments to tackle economic strains or risk instability and even "war".

International Monetary Fund chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn also said rising food prices could have "potentially devastating consequences" for poorer nations, and warned that Asia's fast-growing economies risked a "hard landing".

Overall, he told an audience in Singapore, widening imbalances across and within countries were sparking tensions

Euro unemployment rooted at one in 10, says EU

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) – Unemployment across the eurozone stuck resolutely at a rate of one in 10, European Union data covering the end of last year showed.

Confirmation of an IMF forecast last week that it will take "many years" for the jobs market in Europe and the United States to recover despite growth returning to economies came despite a reduction in the numbers estimated out of work in December 2010.

Seasonally-adjusted figures for the 16 countries that shared the single currency until Estonia joined on January 1 suggested 15.775 million men and women were unemployed going into the festive season.

Across the 27-nation EU, which also includes non-euro heavyweights in Britain and Poland, more than 23 million

that threaten to derail the fragile global economic recovery - and could even spark armed conflict.

Strauss-Kahn said he did not want to comment on the political turmoil in Egypt, with President Hosni Mubarak facing the biggest challenge to his long tenure in charge of the most populous Arab nation.

"But clearly the situation in Egypt is the kind of situation that could have been expected not only in Egypt, when you see the problem created by the high level of unemployment," he told a questioner after giving a speech.

"Now the question is how to rebuild this, that's not only true for Egypt, (it) can be true also for countries where you didn't have this kind of unrest but are almost in the same situation.

"And of course the IMF is ready to help in defining the kind of policy that could be put in place."

Nationwide demonstrations last month led to the ouster of Tunisian strongman Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, while massive street protests raging in Egypt are seeking an end to Mubarak's three-decade rule.

"As tensions between countries increase, we could see ris-

ing protectionism -- of trade and of finance," the IMF managing director said.

"And as tensions within countries increase, we could see rising social and political instability within nations -- even war."

Strauss-Kahn called anew on China to adjust its exchange rate in its own economic interest, but said he disagreed with critics in the United States and elsewhere who want a rapid revaluation to the yuan.

He said the US government itself should not have a problem financing its massive debt, and downplayed fears over Japan's debts after a downgrade last week by Standard & Poor's.

But for the global economy as a whole, Strauss-Kahn struck a worried tone.

"While the recovery is under way, it is not the recovery we wanted," he said.

He said the pace of recovery between advanced and emerging economies was unbalanced and echoed the situation just before the global economic crisis struck in late 2008.

"While growth remains below potential in the advanced economies, emerging and developing economies are growing much faster -- and some may soon be overheating," he said.

Growth in economies with large trade surpluses like China and Germany is still being powered by exports, while expansion in deficit-stricken countries such as the United States is being driven by domestic demand, he noted.

"Food prices are rising too... with potentially devastating consequences for low-income countries," he added.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

R	A	E	A	I	N	D	E	R	E	N	N	A
E	M	A	N	R	A	E	S	E	R	A	I	T
R	S	M	I	T	A	S	N	D	T	S	A	R
T	E	L	S	A	O	S	C	E	T	I	C	
C	T	O	A	F	I	P	S					
E	N	E	T	M	E	N	T	T	A	T	A	I
P	O	R	E	S	E	T	R		P	A	E	
T	E	A	R		R	E	A		F	E	S	
E	R	P			E	R	E		O	R	R	E
E	S	I	S	E	N	O	N	G	S	T	A	R
I	T	S	E		A	R	T	P				
A	I	N		M	A	N	D		E	M	O	R
T	P	E	A		W	I	N	E	S		N	E
H	E	T	N		E	L	A	N	S		A	W
E	R	A	D		R	N	E	S	E		L	O

Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple

hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and



offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as

a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples. Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV, high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



The Queen's offers an authentic taste of Aruba!



Varella, Luisa and the next generation of chef

One of the distinctions of Aruban cuisine is incorporating unique indigenous ingredients such as in Wild Cucumber Stew and a particular light fish chowder accompanied by the local specialties pan bati (corn meal pancake) and funchi (the local version of polenta.) Thus, eating out at the authentically Aruban restaurant, The Queen's, is very affordable, with a true taste of regional cuisine.

Owner Varella Innocencia confesses she opened her

into local cuisine. "We will definitely return to The Queen's," they affirmed, "the food was delicious and the prices are more than right."

The menu sports a variety of steaks and tenderloin, fresh caught seafood, Caribbean lobster, and of course, one of our favorites, and what we consider a true test of local cuisine, "Keshi Yena"—"Filled Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day, all incased in a thick skin



Keshi Yena with plantains and vegetables

restaurant in Oranjestad because "I grew up with this, and loved serving people our island food. My father and mother operated the little restaurant across from the Americana, which some may remember, the original Arawak. I remember how much our customers loved trying the local food, and they especially loved the prices!"

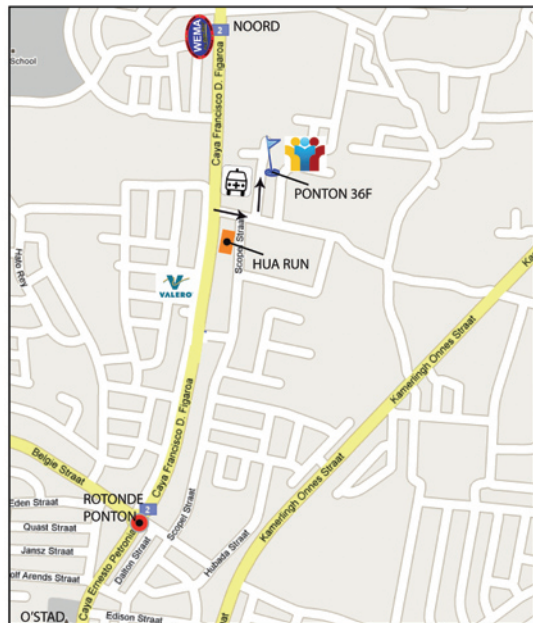
Varella's mom, Luisa, is still in the kitchen, conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations, which is acknowledged on the menu with "Carni Stoba di Mamachi"—"Grandma's Beef Stew," and their Arawak Steak.

We also bumped into island visitors Jim and Callie from Michigan, who were eager to try island food, and were more than pleased with their venture

of melted Gouda. It was very satisfying and particularly memorable paired with The Queen's garlic bread and very special Pica, a mix of chopped onions and the famous local hot pepper, Madame Janette. Not overly spicy, it lent that perfect bit of tang to this deliciously picturesque meal.

Located next to the Harbor at the end of the Weststraat, The Queen's is open from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., daily, offering indoor and outdoor dining. They also have daily specials, aside from an extensive menu; made from whatever is in season.

We noticed a steady stream of islanders coming for lunch in the pleasant surroundings or picking up take-out containers; always a sure sign of a winner is where the locals like to eat!



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5TH MEGA FUNDRAISING WAREHOUSE SALE

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Japan pianist plans marathon Chopin concert



Japan pianist Yukio Yokoyama

TOKYO, Japan (AFP) – A renowned Japanese pianist announced plans to break his own Guinness world record by playing all 212 of composer Frederic Chopin's solo piano pieces at an 18-hour concert in Tokyo.

Yukio Yokoyama told a news conference he wanted to "better understand Chopin and let many more people know about Chopin."

He said he would play the 212 Chopin pieces by ear at the May 3 concert at Tokyo

Opera City from 8:00 am to 2:00 am the following day, with intervals.

Yokoyama's record-breaking Chopin concert in May last year saw him play 166 pieces in chronological order over more than 16 hours to commemorate the bicentennial of the composer's birthday, without using sheet music.

The feat saw Yokoyama take the Guinness world record for "most pieces of music performed by a solo artist in 24 hours".

Along with the 166 pieces played last year, the pianist said the upcoming concert will see him play 46 pieces that the Polish-born Chopin himself decided not to publish, including a work that he composed at the age of seven.

"Rather than perfectly finished works, you can glimpse the human nature of Chopin in his unpublished works," he added.

Born in 1971, Yokoyama studied from the age of 16 at the Paris Conservatoire. After graduating in 1990, he was awarded the third prize at the XII International Chopin Piano Competition in the same year.

"I have kept playing pieces of music by Chopin since my debut and have been trying to see how close I can get to him," Yokoyama said.

"I hope to convey the beauty in some of Chopin's works that he himself was not even aware of," he said.

The concert will be open to the public and will also be broadcast by a Tokyo radio station.

Iran warns France over Louvre artefacts: report

TEHRAN, Iran (AFP) – Tehran has warned it will cut cultural ties with France if renowned Paris museum The Louvre fails to set up an exhibition of Persian artefacts in Iran as agreed, an official was cited as saying.

"If this museum (The Louvre) fails to fulfill its commitment with the (Iranian) Cultural Heritage Organisation in the next two months, then we will cut cultural ties with France," head of the organisation Hamid Baghai was quoted as saying by Tehran Emrouz newspaper.

Under an agreement between Iran and France, "years ago we set up exhibits in The Louvre in exchange for them setting up their Persian artefacts here," he said.

"But The Louvre officials did not take any steps. The officials at The Louvre have until the end of the 1389 (Iranian year ending March 2011) to precisely tell us when and what they are going to set up here," he said, accusing the Paris museum of failing to keep its end of the bargain.

Baghai said one of the exhibitions set up by Iran in The Louvre pertained to the Safavids era (1501-1736) and the other depicts 10,000 years of Iran's civilisation.

This is not the first time that Baghai has taken on a world-renowned museum.

In February 2010, he said Tehran had severed ties with the British Museum in protest at repeated delays in lending the Islamic republic the world-famous Cyrus Cylinder, a frag-



Persian Silver Zoomorphic Bracelet 1600AD

mented 2,600-year old clay item bearing a cuneiform inscription.

In April he was reported as demanding \$300,000 in compensation over the delay by the British Museum.

The British Museum loaned Iran the Cyrus Cylinder in September 2010, bringing to an end the controversy over the ancient terracotta.

It was last shown in Iran in October 1971 during the reign of the former shah as part of commemorations marking 2,500 years of the Persian monarchy.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad personally inaugurated the exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder at a ceremony in which he praised Iran's pre-Islamic culture and heritage.

Many historians regard the Cyrus Cylinder, discovered in 1879, as the world's first declaration of human rights. It was written at the order of Persian ruler Cyrus the Great after his conquest of Babylon in 539 BC. Many of Persian artefacts dating back thousands of years can be seen across museums in Europe, the United States and Russia.

China village builds 'Great Wall' to deter thieves

BEIJING, China (AFP) – Residents of a village in eastern China have followed the ancient emperors and built a "Great Wall" around their increasingly well-off community to keep out thieves, according to state media.

The wall around Aodi in Zhejiang province, seven metres (23 feet) high and nearly a metre thick, was even built in the style of the Great Wall, with a crenellated top and imposing iron gate, the China Daily reported.

But the old-fashioned security measure comes with a modern touch -- residents use a swipe card to enter late at night when the double-doored gate is locked.

The 270 villagers raised most of the 500,000 yuan (\$75,000) cost of building the wall themselves, fed up with rising theft of items such as

mobile phones, computers and cash, the report said.

Incomes in Aodi have risen since the 2007 construction of a provincial highway through the area spurred development, including the building of dozens of factories.

"Thefts have occurred extremely frequently as people are richer and have more expensive furniture, electric equipment and even more cash at home," the report quoted Ruan Guolin, a local official, as saying.

The construction of walls around cities and villages was common in ancient and medieval China. The Great Wall in northern China was built over many centuries to keep out marauders from the north.

Aodi's average annual income last year was more than 20,000 yuan, the report said.

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Puerto Rico hopes to shine in Caribbean Series

The Caribbean Series is an homage to baseball, America's favorite pastime, by men from North, South and Central America.

It's a global event, equal parts Americana and Latino.

Contests in the Caribbean Series can be as intense as those between the Yankees and the Red Sox, and fans are just as patriotic as those who root for Team USA during the Olympics.

But it's the pulsing merengue music, blaring noisemakers in the stands and dancing in the concourse that set the Caribbean Series apart from other tournaments.

Sure, it's a party, but the Caribbean Series round robin is also a showcase. It's an opportunity for big league scouts to see prospects in game action and give unsigned veterans a final look before Spring Training begins.

For Puerto Rico, this year's host of the series, the six-day competition against the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Venezuela that starts on Wednesday also represents the island's shot at reminding the sporting world that baseball is still its No. 1 sport.

"With [Puerto Rico's] league struggling to stay afloat, the Caribbean Series will be an important test in terms of how Puerto Rico presents the series to the fans all over Puerto Rico and to Latin America," said Lou Melendez, MLB's vice president of international baseball operations. "It's a very important time. From a Major League Baseball and Caribbean Confederation standpoint, you want to see the league in Puerto Rico continue to improve and hold its own."

Puerto Rico's problems when it comes to professional baseball are well known. Three years ago, the Puerto Rican Winter League took a one-year hiatus because of financial instability. The number of Major League players from Puerto Rico has declined in the last decade, despite the emergence of the Molina brothers (Bengie, Jose and, Yadier), Carlos Bel-



tran, Javier Vazquez, Alex Rios and Alex Cora. Only Cora returns to play on the island each winter.

There were 21 players from Puerto Rico on Opening Day rosters last season, 17 fewer than in 2002. By contrast, the Dominican Republic, now often referred to as the "island of baseball," had 86 players on Opening Day rosters last year.

Some blame the Puerto Rico's participation in the First-Year Player Draft for the dwindling number of Puerto Ricans in the big leagues. Others blame apathy among the local youth, while others attribute the decline of the sport to the rise in popularity of volleyball and basketball. Team owners are also held responsible by media and fans.

"This Caribbean Series will let us measure how we compare with other leagues right now and how far we have to go," said Jorge Colon Delgado, the former official historian of the Puerto Rican Professional League. "We used to be on top, but we haven't won since 2000 [Sancti Spiritus], and that's too long. Maybe this is the year it changes."

This year's field consists of Puerto Rico's Criollos de Caguas, the Dominican Republic's Toros del Este, Mexico's Yaquis de Obregon and Venezuela's Caribes de Anzoategui.

The backdrop is Estadio Isidoro Garcia in Mayaguez, the stadium that hosted the Central American Games last summer. Located in the middle of the west coast, the city is home to Los Indios de

Mayaguez. Los Indios and Ponce are the only two teams to have played every season in Puerto Rico's Winter League since the league began in 1938.

The birthplace of former Major League Jose Vidro and current Giants pitcher Jonathan Sanchez, Mayaguez also boasts 16 Puerto Rican Professional League titles, the most in league history.

It's not just a baseball city. Known for its art and culture, Mayaguez is also famous for the University of Puerto Rico,

Cerveceria India -- the maker of Medalla beer -- and the sweetest mangoes on the island.

"It is hard to say that Ponce does not have the greatest baseball tradition on the island, and Caguas is also very proud, but Mayaguez has a rich history, too," Colon said. "A team's popularity depends on where you live, but Mayaguez's role in Puerto Rico baseball history is undeniable. It's been tremendous."

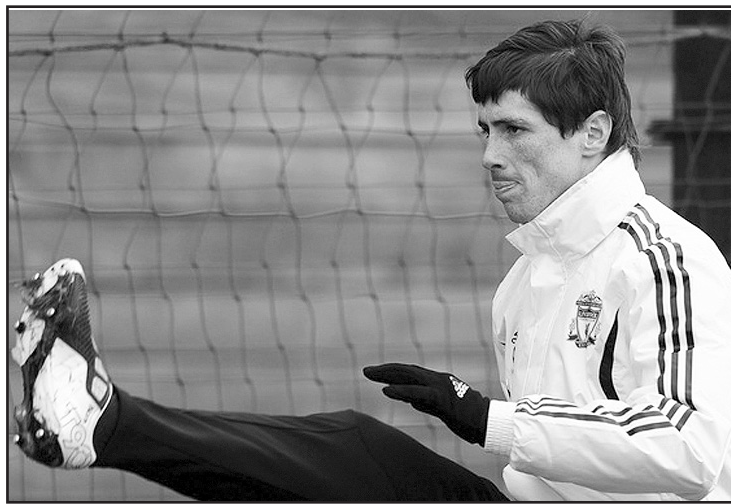
The history of the Caribbean Series can be traced back to the union of the leagues in Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela -- and the formation of the Caribbean Federation in 1948. After Cuba in 1949, Puerto Rico played host to

the Caribbean Series in 1950, followed by Venezuela in 1951 and Panama in 1952.

The initial design was 12 games, with each team squaring off against one another twice. From 1949 to 1960, Cuba won the title seven times. Puerto Rico won four times during that span, and Panama won its first and only Caribbean Series title in 1950.

In 1959, Fidel Castro took over in Cuba and declared it a Communist nation, ending its participation in the event after 1960. Depleted, the Caribbean Series disappeared for a decade until a revival in 1970 that saw the addition of the Dominican Republic and Mexico and the disappearance of Panama.

Record buy Torres ready to face Liverpool



LONDON (AFP) - Fernando Torres insists he will be not be fazed by the prospect of making his Chelsea debut against his former club Liverpool on Sunday.

Torres made an astonishing 50 million pounds (80 million dollars) switch from Liverpool to Stamford Bridge just before Monday's transfer deadline and the Spain striker is likely to make his first appearance for Chelsea against his old mates from Anfield this weekend.

The British record transfer fee paid by Chelsea for Torres hasn't placated some Liverpool fans, who burned replica shirts with the Spain

striker's name on when news of the deal reached Merseyside.

Torres acknowledges it would be a potentially overwhelming moment to face Liverpool so early in his Chelsea career, but the 26-year-old has not asked to miss the Bridge clash, even though he could be taunted by Reds supporters.

"It is like the destiny," Torres said. "It is not perfect for me but we will see what happens and I only have good words about Liverpool."

"They made me a top player and gave me the chance to play at the top level."

"I will never say anything bad about Liverpool. I have been very happy there, but now the history is different and I am playing for Chelsea."

"If I have the chance to play, I will do my best for Chelsea and hopefully I can score."

While Torres enjoyed most of his time at Liverpool, he admits he first started to think about leaving Anfield at the end of last season following the club's failure to qualify for the Champions League.

The former Atletico Madrid star had hoped to win a host of medals when he moved to Anfield, but his trophy cabinet was still empty after four years.

The chance to play for perennial contenders Chelsea was a major driving force behind his decision to ask to leave and Torres made it clear that the Blues are on another level to Liverpool.

"I felt from last summer that I need to do a step forward in my career and for my ambition as a footballer," he told Chelsea's website.

"I am joining a team that is at the top level. There is not another level after Chelsea."

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Roethlisberger seeks Super Bowl redemption

DALLAS, Texas (AFP) — Ben Roethlisberger, who missed the first four games of this season because of a suspension, says he hopes people will look beyond his past transgressions and start to see him as a role model.

Roethlisberger spoke Monday after arriving in Texas for Super Bowl 45 and compared the behavior that earned him a four-game ban after allegations of sexual assault to throwing an interception.

"It is about how you come back from mistakes," said Roethlisberger. "It is like a football game. You throw an interception and you bounce back from your mistake."

"I want to be a role model and have kids look up to me. I like it when kids wear my jerseys."

The 28-year-old Roethlisberger is clearly hoping a Super Bowl win over the Green Bay Packers on Sunday will further repair his tarnished image.

Roethlisberger was slapped with the suspension in April for violating the league's personal-conduct policy. He was accused of sexual assault by a 20-year-old woman at a Georgia nightclub. Criminal charges were never filed.

In his absence, the Steelers won three-straight games to start the season before dropping their first game 17-14 at home against Baltimore.



Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said Monday that Roethlisberger has the backing of his teammates.

"Ben is a highly respected member of our team," Tomlin said at the Omni Hotel in Fort Worth, which will be the Steelers' headquarters leading up to Sunday's Super Bowl.

"We all make mistakes and his are well documented."

Asked if his experiences had changed him as a person, Roethlisberger became uneasy Monday initially refusing to comment.

"For me to sit and reflect, this is not the time to do it," he repeated several times.

Roethlisberger, a first-round draft pick (11th overall) in 2004, will be going up against another former first-round pick in Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

"He is a great quarterback,"

one of the best in the game," Roethlisberger said of Rodgers, the 24th pick overall in 2005.

Roethlisberger threw for a franchise record 503 yards against Green Bay late in the 2009 season, including a game-winning 19 yard touchdown pass to Mike Wallace for the 37-36 win.

"If you look at the two teams on paper, we run the ball a bit more than they do but the neat thing is these are two storied franchises going against each other," Roethlisberger said.

Roethlisberger said the moment the Steelers got off the plane Monday they knew this week was going to be different.

"You see the helicopters, the police and the media and if you are not used to it then it can be overwhelming."

Jets staffer resigns after tripping incident

NEW YORK (AFP) — New York Jets strength trainer Sal Alosi has resigned less than two months after he admitted tripping an opposing player on a punt return during a game, the NFL team said.

Alosi had been suspended without pay for the rest of the season and fined 25,000 dollars by the Jets for sticking out his knee to trip Miami's Nolan Carroll during a December 12 contest.

Alosi was suspended indefinitely after confirming he not only tripped Carroll but also instructed Jets players to form a "wall" along the sideline of the play in question.

The NFL fined the Jets 100,000 dollars over the incident because players ranged in a banned sideline area with designs to impede their Miami opponents in what league officials deemed a dangerous move as well as a violation of competition rules.





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Wacky side of Super Bowl on display



Ryan Clark of the Pittsburgh Steelers wears a Troy Polamalu wig during Super Bowl XLV Media Day

DALLAS (AFP) - The wacky and weird side of Super Bowl 45 was on display Tuesday as the Green Bay Packers and Pittsburgh Steelers were able to let their hair down for one day in the build up to Super Bowl 45.

The Packers sang songs, showed off their playoff beards, while the Steelers players danced, told jokes and posed for their team photo as part of Super Bowl 45's media day.

Media day is as much about the spectacle as it is about interviews with the traditional media mixing with bloggers, tweeters and reporters from entertainment media who wore costumes, ranging from super hero to bullfighter.

The players got into the act as well getting together in groups to sing Journey's 'Don't Stop Believin' with a comedian from Jay Leno's The Tonight Show and Packers star quarterback Aaron Rodgers joking that "Green Bay is a little too cold for me."

Rodgers could have just as easily been talking about Dallas this week as the members of the Packers and Steelers woke up Tuesday for their first full day in Dallas to snow and ice on the ground, bone-chilling winds and temperatures 30 degrees Fahrenheit below normal.

heit below normal.

"Man this is crazy," said Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger. "I woke up this morning and saw the snow and thought I was home for a second."

The players were divided into three groups at Cowboys Stadium. Stars like Roethlisberger and Rodgers answered questions from podiums placed on the south side of the pitch while others had designated interview spots in the stands and the rest roamed the sidelines mixing with the media on a one-on-one basis.

Green Bay veteran Donald Driver wore an extra jacket and wrapped a towel around his neck but it wasn't enough to keep him from freezing with snow blowing outside the stadium.

"They said 'let the old man freeze,'" Driver joked. "I am shivering right now. They must have said 'he doesn't wear sleeves during the season so he can handle it.'"

Driver is the oldest player in on the Packers' roster and is seeking his first Super Bowl ring in his 12th season.

"I am here for the first time and I am going to enjoy it," said Driver, who turns 36 on Wednesday. "To get a ring on my finger would mean more to me than anyone else."

Nadal out 10 days with thigh muscle tear

MADRID (AFP) - Spanish world number one Rafael Nadal must rest for ten days with a thigh muscle tear, he said Tuesday on his website.

Nadal crashed out of the Australian Open after struggling with the injury against compatriot David Ferrer and he explained he has to rest up

following tests which showed that he is suffering from an 'adductor longus rupture of the right leg' according to a report submitted by Dr. Angel Ruiz Cotorro.

Nadal added he was undergoing physiotherapy and anti-inflammatory treatments, as well as specific stretches with

doctors estimating a recovery period of "about ten days".

His loss Down Under to Ferrer deprived him of a 'Rafa Slam' - a fourth straight non-calendar year Grand Slam after winning the French Open, Wimbledon and US Open crowns last year.



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